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Letter, 1959 May 16, from Elton C. Fox to Eva Jessye

Elton C. Fox

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[Ethan C. Fox]

51-28 30th Avenue
Woodside 77, N. Y.
May 16, 1959

Dear Eva,

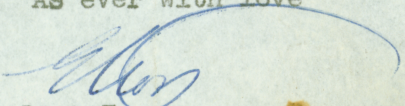
You wrote me just a few days after I arrived in Rome and I am just now getting your letter because from there I went on down to Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Guinea as a special reporter (artist-reporter) for The New York Age. For nearly six weeks I toured the above named countries, sketching and talking with scores of people. Eva, West Africa is simply fabulous and it must be seen to be believed. Ghana is really most impressive, at least the part that my limited time confined me to is most impressive and that, of course, is the capital city of Accra. Prime Minister Nkrumah was visiting Sekou Toure in Guinea when I arrived in Conakry, one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen (and I've seen a number of handsome Latin-American Cities) Monrovia is one of the worst places imaginable. NEVER go there unless you absolutely have to because it is a city strictly for those who 'have'. For people who 'has to git' it is a most abominable place, rotten to the core politically and terribly unkind to its own poor citizens. What great irony that Liberia would develop from a haven for slaves to a breeder of modern slaves!

But Nigeria! Now there's the coming power of West Africa! Nigerians who are alert to their responsibilities to the mother continent estimate that in five years they will have surpassed Ghana. And it is not unlikely that they are correct, what with the tremendous land area and manpower there ~~to~~ to draw upon. I stopped first in Kano, the largest city of Northern Nigeria, and a city half Moslem and half Christian. From there I went on to Western Nigeria, visiting the cities of Ibadan, Oyo, Ikeja and Lagos. The University College of Ibadan is an architect's dream, as is the University College of Ghana, and I have seen nothing to compare with the beauty of either place here in our own country. In Ghana I had the privilege of visiting the famous Achimota School, with its famous trademark over the door of the administration building (the black and white keys of the piano) suggesting that harmonious music is played on both keys. This was the theory of Dr. Aggrey and his memory is deeply revered in Ghana.

There is so much more to tell and perhaps whenever you come this way again we will get together for another session. How about our fried chicken dinner?

Your own work sounds interesting and I am sure you will get the best music possible out of the material you find at hand. Whenever you do another program and you can remember to send me a souvenir program please do not fail to do so. You'll certainly do move about and in that way I am sure you cannot grow stale. Still I know few artists who remain too long away from New York and I suspect that you'll be in town again soon if for but a short time. I certainly hope to see you though I am sure I will not be getting out your way any time soon, though one never knows, DO one? Well, dear, good luck and thanks for writing. And let's hear from you again soon.

As ever with love


P. S. I just got back to The U. S. A. last Tuesday and I aint married--YET